

Annex D

Methodology for Estimating Methane Emissions from Coal Mining

The methodology for estimating methane emissions from coal mining consists of two distinct steps. The first step addresses emissions from underground mines. For these mines, emissions are estimated on a mine-by-mine basis and then are summed to determine total emissions. The second step of the analysis involves estimating methane emissions for surface mines and post-mining activities. In contrast to the methodology for underground mines, which uses mine-specific data, the surface mine and post-mining activities analysis consists of multiplying basin-specific coal production by basin-specific emission factors.

Step 1: Estimate Methane Liberated and Methane Emitted from Underground Mines

Underground mines generate methane from ventilation systems and from degasification systems. Some mines recover and use methane generated from degasification systems, thereby reducing emissions to the atmosphere. Total methane emitted from underground mines equals the methane liberated from ventilation systems, plus the methane liberated from degasification systems, minus methane recovered and used.

Step 1.1 Estimate Methane Liberated from Ventilation Systems

All coal mines with detectable methane emissions¹ use ventilation systems to ensure that methane levels remain within safe concentrations. Many coal mines do not have detectable levels of methane, while others emit several million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) from their ventilation systems. On a quarterly basis, the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) measures methane emissions levels at underground mines. MSHA maintains a database of measurement data from all underground mines with detectable levels of methane in their ventilation air. Based on the four quarterly measurements, MSHA estimates average daily methane liberated at each of the underground mines with detectable emissions.

For the years 1990 through 1996, MSHA emissions data were obtained for a large but incomplete subset of all mines with detectable emissions. This subset includes mines emitting at least 0.1 MMCFD for some years and at least 0.5 MMCFD for other years, as shown in Table D-1. Well over 90 percent of all ventilation emissions were concentrated in these subsets. For 1997, the complete MSHA database for all 586 mines with detectable methane emissions was obtained. These mines were assumed to account for 100 percent of methane liberated from underground mines. The 1998 emissions dataset from MSHA includes mines emitting at least 0.1 MMCFD.

Using the complete database from 1997, the proportion of total emissions accounted for by mines emitting more and less than 0.1 MMCFD or 0.5 MMCFD was estimated (see Table D-1). These proportions were then applied to the years 1990 through 1998 to account for the less than 10 percent of ventilation emissions coming from mines without MSHA data.

Average daily methane emissions were multiplied by 365 to determine the annual emissions for each mine. Total ventilation emissions for a particular year were estimated by summing emissions from individual mines.

¹ MSHA records coal mine methane readings with concentrations of greater than 50 ppm (parts per million) methane. Readings below this threshold are considered non-detectable.

Table D-1: Mine-Specific Data Used to Estimate Ventilation Emissions

Year	Individual Mine Data Used
1990	All Mines Emitting at Least 0.1 MMCFD (Assumed to Account for 97.8% of Total)*
1991	1990 Emissions Factors Used Instead of Mine-Specific Data
1992	1990 Emissions Factors Used Instead of Mine-Specific Data
1993	All Mines Emitting at Least 0.1 MMCFD (Assumed to Account for 97.8% of Total)*
1994	All Mines Emitting at Least 0.1 MMCFD (Assumed to Account for 97.8% of Total)*
1995	All Mines Emitting at Least 0.5 MMCFD (Assumed to Account for 94.1% of Total)*
1996	All Mines Emitting at Least 0.5 MMCFD (Assumed to Account for 94.1% of Total)*
1997	All Mines with Detectable Emissions (Assumed to Account for 100% of Total)
1998	All Mines Emitting at Least 0.1 MMCFD (Assumed to Account for 97.8% of Total)*

* Factor derived from a complete set of individual mine data collected for 1997.

Step 1.2 Estimate Methane Liberated from Degasification Systems

Coal mines use several different types of degasification systems to remove methane, including vertical wells and horizontal boreholes to recover methane prior to mining of the coal seam. Gob wells and cross-measure boreholes recover methane from the overburden (i.e., GOB area) after mining of the seam (primarily in longwall mines).

MSHA collects information about the presence and type of degasification systems in some mines, but does not collect quantitative data on the amount of methane liberated. Thus, the methodology estimated degasification emissions on a mine-by-mine basis based on other sources of available data. Many of the coal mines employing degasification systems have provided EPA with information regarding methane liberated from their degasification systems. For these mines, this reported information was used as the estimate. In other cases in which mines sell methane recovered from degasification systems to a pipeline, gas sales were used to estimate methane liberated from degasification systems (see Step 1.3). Finally, for those mines that do not sell methane to a pipeline and have not provided information to EPA, methane liberated from degasification systems was estimated based on the type of system employed. For example, for coal mines employing gob wells and horizontal boreholes, the methodology assumes that degasification emissions account for 40 percent of total methane liberated from the mine.

Step 1.3: Estimate Methane Recovered from Degasification Systems and Used (Emissions Avoided)

In 1998, twelve active coal mines had developed methane recovery and use projects and sold the recovered methane to a pipeline. One coal mine also used some recovered methane in a thermal dryer in addition to selling gas to a pipeline. Where available, state agency gas sales data were used to estimate emissions avoided for these projects. Emissions avoided were attributed to the year in which the coal seam was mined. For example, if a coal mine recovered and sold methane using a vertical well drilled five years in advance of mining, the emissions avoided associated with those gas sales were attributed to the year during which the well was mined-through (e.g., five years after the gas was sold). In order to estimate emissions avoided for those coal mines using degasification methods that recover methane in advance of mining, information was needed regarding the amount of gas recovered and the number of years in advance of mining that wells were drilled. In most cases, coal mine operators provided this information, which was then used to estimate emissions avoided for a particular year. Additionally, several state agencies provided production data for individual wells. For some mines, these individual well data were used to assign gas sales from individual wells to the appropriate emissions avoided year.

Step 2: Estimate Methane Emitted from Surface Mines and Post-Mining Activities

Mine-specific data were not available for estimating methane emissions from surface coal mines or for post-mining activities. For surface mines and post-mining activities, basin-specific coal production was multiplied by a basin-specific emission factor to determine methane emissions.

Step 2.1: Define the Geographic Resolution of the Analysis and Collect Coal Production Data

The first step in estimating methane emissions from surface mining and post-mining activities was to define the geographic resolution of the analysis and to collect coal production data at that level of resolution. The analysis was conducted by coal basin as defined in Table D-2, which presents coal basin definitions by basin and by state.

The Energy Information Agency's (EIA) Coal Industry Annual reports state- and county-specific underground and surface coal production by year. To calculate production by basin, the state level data were grouped into coal basins using the basin definitions listed in Table D-2. For two states—West Virginia and Kentucky—county-level production data was used for the basin assignments because coal production occurred from geologically distinct coal basins within these states. Table D-3 presents the coal production data aggregated by basin.

Step 2.2: Estimate Emissions Factors for Each Emissions Type

Emission factors for surface mined coal were developed from the *in situ* methane content of the surface coal in each basin. Based on an analysis presented in EPA (1993), surface mining emission factors were estimated to be from 1 to 3 times the average *in situ* methane content in the basin. For this analysis, the surface mining emission factor was determined to be twice the *in situ* methane content in the basin. Furthermore, the post-mining emission factors used were estimated to be 25 to 40 percent of the average *in situ* methane content in the basin. For this analysis, the post-mining emission factor was determined to be 32.5 percent of the *in situ* methane content in the basin. Table D-4 presents the average *in situ* content for each basin, along with the resulting emission factor estimates.

Step 2.3: Estimate Methane Emitted

The total amount of methane emitted was calculated by multiplying the coal production in each basin by the appropriate emission factors.

Total annual methane emissions is equal to the sum of underground mine emissions plus surface mine emissions plus post-mining emissions. Table D- 5 and Table D-6 present estimates of methane liberated, used, and emitted for 1990 through 1998. Table D-7 provides emissions by state.

Table D-2: Coal Basin Definitions by Basin and by State

Basin	States
Northern Appalachian Basin	Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West VA North
Central Appalachian Basin	Kentucky East, Tennessee, Virginia, West VA South
Warrior Basin	Alabama
Illinois Basin	Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky West
South West and Rockies Basin	Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah
North Great Plains Basin	Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming
West Interior Basin	Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas
Northwest Basin	Alaska, Washington
State	Basin
Alabama	Warrior Basin
Alaska	Northwest Basin
Arizona	South West And Rockies Basin
Arkansas	West Interior Basin
California	South West And Rockies Basin
Colorado	South West And Rockies Basin
Illinois	Illinois Basin
Indiana	Illinois Basin
Iowa	West Interior Basin
Kansas	West Interior Basin
Kentucky East	Central Appalachian Basin
Kentucky West	Illinois Basin
Louisiana	West Interior Basin
Maryland	Northern Appalachian Basin
Missouri	West Interior Basin
Montana	North Great Plains Basin
New Mexico	South West And Rockies Basin
North Dakota	North Great Plains Basin
Ohio	Northern Appalachian Basin
Oklahoma	West Interior Basin
Pennsylvania.	Northern Appalachian Basin
Tennessee	Central Appalachian Basin
Texas	West Interior Basin
Utah	South West And Rockies Basin
Virginia	Central Appalachian Basin
Washington	Northwest Basin
West Virginia South	Central Appalachian Basin
West Virginia North	Northern Appalachian Basin
Wyoming	North Great Plains Basin

Table D-3: Annual Coal Production (Thousand Short Tons)*Underground Coal Production*

Basin	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Northern Appalachia	103,865	103,450	105,220	77,032	100,122	98,103	106,729	112,135	116,460
Central Appalachia	198,412	181,873	177,777	164,845	170,893	166,495	171,845	177,720	170,750
Warrior	17,531	17,062	15,944	15,557	14,471	17,605	18,217	18,505	17,405
Illinois	69,167	69,947	73,154	55,967	69,050	69,009	67,046	64,728	62,674
S. West/Rockies	32,754	31,568	31,670	35,409	41,681	42,994	43,088	44,503	45,314
N. Great Plains	1,722	2,418	2,511	2,146	2,738	2,018	2,788	2,854	3,183
West Interior	105	26	59	100	147	25	137	212	217
Northwest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	423,556	406,344	406,335	351,056	399,102	396,249	409,850	420,657	416,002

Surface Coal Production

Basin	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Northern Appalachia	60,761	51,124	50,512	48,641	44,960	39,372	39,788	40,179	41,283
Central Appalachia	94,343	91,785	95,163	94,433	106,129	106,250	108,869	113,275	108,874
Warrior	11,413	10,104	9,775	9,211	8,795	7,036	6,420	5,963	5,608
Illinois	72,000	63,483	58,814	50,535	51,868	40,376	44,754	46,862	47,502
S. West/Rockies	43,863	42,985	46,052	48,765	49,119	46,643	43,814	48,374	50,304
N. Great Plains	249,356	259,194	258,281	275,873	308,279	331,367	343,404	349,612	384,596
West Interior	64,310	61,889	63,562	60,574	58,791	59,116	60,912	59,061	57,980
Northwest	6,707	6,579	6,785	6,340	6,460	6,566	6,046	5,945	5,982
Total	602,753	587,143	588,944	594,372	634,401	636,726	654,007	669,271	702,130

Total Coal Production

Basin	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Northern Appalachia	164,626	154,574	155,732	125,673	145,082	137,475	146,517	152,314	157,743
Central Appalachia	292,755	273,658	272,940	259,278	277,022	272,745	280,714	290,995	279,624
Warrior	28,944	27,166	25,719	24,768	23,266	24,641	24,637	24,468	23,013
Illinois	141,167	133,430	131,968	106,502	120,918	109,385	111,800	111,590	110,176
S. West/Rockies	76,617	74,553	77,722	84,174	90,800	89,637	86,902	92,877	95,618
N. Great Plains	251,078	261,612	260,792	278,019	311,017	333,385	346,192	352,466	387,779
West Interior	64,415	61,915	63,621	60,674	58,938	59,141	61,049	59,273	58,197
Northwest	6,707	6,579	6,785	6,340	6,460	6,566	6,046	5,945	5,982
Total	1,026,309	993,487	995,279	945,428	1,033,503	1,032,975	1,063,857	1,082,992	1,118,132

Source: EIA (1990-99), Coal Industry Annual. U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, DC, Table 3.

Note: Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Table D-4: Coal Surface and Post-Mining Methane Emission Factors (ft³ Per Short Ton)

Basin	Surface Average <i>in situ</i> Content	Underground Average <i>In situ</i> Content	Surface Mine Factors	Post-Mining Surface Factors	Post Mining Underground
Northern Appalachia	49.3	171.7	98.6	16.0	16.0
Central Appalachia	49.3	330.7	98.6	16.0	16.0
Warrior	49.3	318.0	98.6	16.0	16.0
Illinois	39.0	57.20	78.0	12.7	12.7
S. West/Rockies	15.3	225.8	30.6	5.0	5.0
N. Great Plains	3.2	41.67	6.4	1.0	1.0
West Interior	3.2	41.67	6.4	1.0	1.0
Northwest	3.2	41.67	6.4	1.0	1.0

Source: EPA (1993), Anthropogenic Methane Emissions in the United States: Estimates for 1990, Report to Congress, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Air and Radiation, April.

Table D- 5: Underground Coal Mining Methane Emissions (Billion Cubic Feet)

Activity	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Ventilation Output	112	NA	NA	95	96	102	90	96	91
Adjustment Factor for Mine Data ^a	97.8%	NA	NA	97.8%	97.8%	91.4%	91.4%	100.0 %	97.8%
Adjusted Ventilation Output	114	NA	NA	97	98	111	99	96	93
Degasification System Liberated	57	NA	NA	49	50	50	51	57	54
Total Underground Liberated Recovered & Used	171 (15)	164 (15)	162 (19)	146 (24)	149 (29)	161 (31)	150 (35)	153 (42)	147 (43)
Total	156	149	142	121	119	130	115	112	103

^a Refer to Table D-1:

Note: Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Table D-6: Total Coal Mining Methane Emissions (Billion Cubic Feet)

Activity	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Underground Mining	156	149	142	121	119	130	115	112	103
Surface Mining	25	23	23	23	24	22	23	24	23
Post-Mining (Underground)	33	31	30	27	30	30	31	31	31
Post-Mining (Surface)	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Total	218	207	200	175	177	185	172	171	162

Note: Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Table D-7: Total Coal Mining Methane Emissions by State (Million Cubic Feet)

State	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Alabama	33,650	27,000	30,713	39,945	30,808	26,722	26,910
Alaska	13	12	12	13	11	11	10
Arizona	402	433	464	425	371	417	403
Arkansas	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
California	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colorado	10,117	7,038	9,029	8,541	5,795	9,057	6,016
Illinois	10,643	8,737	10,624	11,106	10,890	8,571	7,974
Indiana	3,149	2,623	2,791	2,106	2,480	3,088	3,223
Iowa	3	1	+	0	0	0	0
Kansas	5	3	2	2	2	3	3
Kentucky	21,229	19,823	21,037	19,103	18,292	20,089	18,801
Louisiana	24	23	26	28	24	26	24
Maryland	510	245	256	259	287	296	281
Missouri	20	5	6	4	5	3	3
Montana	280	267	310	294	283	305	319
New Mexico	905	1,186	1,223	980	856	961	1,017
North Dakota	217	238	240	224	222	220	227
Ohio	4,710	4,110	4,377	3,900	3,992	4,313	4,150
Oklahoma	13	14	52	14	14	132	137
Pennsylvania	22,573	26,437	24,026	27,086	26,567	30,339	31,313
Tennessee	800	350	338	366	418	390	309
Texas	415	406	389	392	410	397	391
Utah	4,562	4,512	3,696	3,541	4,061	4,807	5,059
Virginia	45,883	30,454	26,782	19,898	19,857	16,990	9,514
Washington	37	35	36	36	34	33	35
West Virginia	56,636	39,477	38,565	44,894	44,380	41,454	43,402
Wyoming	1,382	1,578	1,782	1,977	2,090	2,122	2,361
Total	218,180	175,007	176,781	185,134	172,149	170,746	161,883

+ Does not exceed 0.5 Million Cubic Feet

Note: The emission estimates provided above are inclusive of emissions from underground mines, surface mines and post-mining activities. The following states have neither underground nor surface mining and thus report no emissions as a result of coal mining: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Emission estimates are not given for 1991 and 1992 because underground mine data was not available for those years.